

## [J. B. McCutchen]

1

Life [?]

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas.

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### RANGE-LORE

J. B. (Uncle Joe) McCutchen was born in Coryell County near Gatesville, Texas in 1858. Since 1889 he has lived in and near Bronte, Texas. He still owns and looks after his farm and ranch, is a director in the First National Bank of Bronte. Mr. McCutchen's father was one of the very early citizens of Coryell County. He was not only a lawyer but a prominent stockman in that county. He was county judge of that county for a number of years serving during the Civil War. At the close of the war he resigned his judgeship because, he said, he could not take the "Iron Clad Oath" and be true to the South. J. B. McCutchen says:

"After the war my father joined the Texas Rangers. He was captain of his band. It was also his duty to look after needy war widows in his section.

"During the war the cattle were turned loose and went wild. Men were too busy fighting to look after their property. My father was lucky enough to have a son old enough to keep his cattle pretty well branded. When the war was over there were any many unbranded cattle. No one know the owners. Some men got rich branding the strays. There was a court order passed in 2 Coryell County, authorizing whosoever would pay a small amount per head, to

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brand and take possession of the unbranded cattle. My father, like many others, was very conscientious and would not claim anything that did not have his brand on it.

"I don't remember very much about Indian disturbances, although I saw plenty of them when just a little boy. I do remember people would cut little triangle shaped holes in the lower walls of the houses so they could shoot at the Redskins when they'd come sneaking around. One time some Comanches came to our house to try to steal some horses. Father always kept them tied to some trees near the house at night. We had a little old barking dog that discovered the Indians and gave the alarm. When the men got up to investigate they could see the Indians. They were trying to loose the horses. Our folks began shooting and scared 'em away before they could get the horses, but they did get away with some of our neighbor's horses not so many miles away. They trailed the thieves for awhile the next day, but finally gave up. From what my father said, the settlers had to be constantly on guard against them.

"I began riding when just a little tyke. I rode and worked on my father's ranch. All boys rode them days. I came west in 1878, and landed at Camp Colorado and got a job on the McClennan ranch. I worked for them a good many years and continued to work with their outfit after I was married and acquired a little herd of my own. While working with the McClennan outfit we were delivering some cattle further west and had 3 camped for the night a little ways south of the Santa Anna Mountain. We had two thousand head in that herd. A storm came up about 10:00 o'clock. It was a bad electrical storm, [too?]. You could see the lightning playing on the horns of the cattle. The thunder was terrifying, so keen and loud. The boss called us all out sometime before the storm struck. Only one man refused to try to help hold them. He said he didn't agree to work night and day too. We stayed with them and managed to keep them from scattering, but the leaders [got?] to running and the whole herd ran and we ran with them, always beside them and trying to get in the load so that we could turn them and get them to milling. We were twelve miles from our camp when we finally got control of the herd and got them to circling. We kept them circling 'til they had quieted down. We were all as wet as drowned rats. The boss told me to stay and

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help him keep the herd together and sent the other boys back to camp. They lost their way and it was 2:00 o'clock the next day before they came back to us. We were plenty tired and hungry. The boss turned the herd over to the other boys to drive back and we lit out for camp. That was Saturday and the boss gave me a holiday until Monday.

"I had bought a little ranch in Coleman County north of the present town of Santa Anna. I sold it [in?] 1889 and came to [?] County where I bought a ranch south of Bronte. There were few fences here at that time. When I first came to Bronte it was a little one teacher school called O-So; no post office. 4 The school district was a very large one, and the first year after I came I took the school census and there were eighteen pupils in the district. We got our mail and supplies at Maverick or old Fort Chadbourne. We petitioned for a post office and got it in 1890.

"I knew some awful good bronc busters. Clarence Jones, F. Simms and Babe Bradshaw all rode in this part of the country and were real riders. Babe Bradshaw, for whom the town of Bradshaw in Taylor County was named, could ride anything. He was a good roper, too.

"There was lots of trouble when ranchers first began building fences. The big ranchers would often fence in the little stockman or farmer, crowding him out. Many times the man would buy up several sections and fence in more than they had bought. The free rangers resented this. Lots of men had a little bunch of cattle but didn't have the means to buy and fence a ranch. They couldn't understand why it didn't remain free as there seemed to be plenty for everybody at that time. I was invited to several wire cutting parties, but can truthfully say I never went to one. They would cut the wires and many times burn the posts. I remember about the Baugh party. Baugh owned a big ranch in Coleman County. He had just built a string of fence about ten miles square. There was a traitor that put old Baugh wise. He had the Rangers ready at his place and when the wire cutting began, a fight ensued and the Rangers shot two of the cutting party. There were many against and 5 many in favor of fences. And mistakes were made on both sides. Lee Shields of

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Coleman City was a candidate for a seat in the Texas Legislature and was very much against fences and thought the wire cutters were often justified in what they were doing.

“Those were good old days, although sometimes hard. We always worked hard on the range and really enjoyed a holiday. When we did get one the boys, the unmarried ones especially, made for the nearest town or a Saturday night dance. Cowboy life and living in the open makes a man tough physically and otherwise. We learned to accept circumstances and to overcome many obstacles, too.” Range-lore

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

J. B. McCutchen, Bronte, Texas, interviewed March 16, 1938. 1 Beliefs and Customs - occupational lore

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### COWBOY LORE

J. B. (Uncle Joe) McCutchen was born in Coryell County near Gatesville , Texas in 1858. He came west to Runnels and Coleman Counties in [1878?]. He was married to Miss Georgia Gentry of Coryell County in 1884. In 1889 he moved to [Coke?] County, bought a ranch and since that time Since 1889 he has lived in and near [?] Bronte, Texas . He still owns and looks after his farm and ranch, is a director in The First National Bank of

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Bronte. He also owns other property in the town of Bronte. He is prominent in civic and social affairs of his community and county. He has been a member of [?] The Missionary Baptist church of Bronte forty five years. And is always interested in the welfare of his people (townspeople) His friends are numbered by his acquaintances.

"Mr. McCutchens McCutchen's father -always known as Judge McCutchen- was one of the very early citizens of Coryell County. He was not only a lawyer but a prominent stockman stockman in that county. He was county Judge of that county for a number of years serving during the Civil War. At the close of the war he resigned his Judgeship because ", he said, " he could not take The Iron Clad Oath and be true to the south South . " C12 - 12/11/41 - Texas [?] J.B. McCutchen says : after "After the war my father join joined the Texas Rangers. He was Captain of his band. It was also his duty to look after needy war widows in his section. " During the war the cattle were turned loose and went wild. 2 Men were too busy fighting to look after their property. My father was lucky enough to have a son old enough -and too young to go to the war- to keep his cattle pretty well branded . up. When then the war was over there were any unbranded cattle. No one knew the owners. Some men got rich branding the strays. There was a court order passed in Coryell County, / [Authorizing?] whosoever would pay a small amount per head, to brand and take possession of the unbranded cattle. My father, like many others, was very conscientious and would not claim anything that did not have his brand on it. " I don't remember very much about Indian disturbances, although although I saw plenty of them when just a little boy. I do remember they'd people would cut little triangle shaped holes in the lower lower walls of the houses [?] so they could shoot at the redskins Redskins when they'd come sneaking around. I remember one One time some Comanches came to our house to try to steal some horses. Father always kept them tied to some trees near the house at night. We had a little old barking dog that discovered the Indians and gave the alarm. When the men got up to investigate they could see the Indians. They were trying to [?] loose the horses. Our folks began shooting and scared 'em away before they could get the horses, but they did get away with some of our neighbors neighbor's horses

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came I took the school census and there were eighteen pupils in the district. We got our mail and supplies at Maverick or / Old Ft. Chadbourne. We petitioned for a Post Office and got it in 1890. W. L. McAulay (Uncle Bill) was the [?] man I saw when I came to Coke County. Bob Castlebury being the first. Uncle Bill lived at Live Oak then and was range boss of this section and [the best cowman?] I [ever knew]. He was an A-1 rider too. All riders were good ones then. They had to be. " I knew some awful good bronc busters. Clarence Jones , F. Simms and Babe Bradshaw all rode in this part of the country and were real riders. Babe Bradshaw , - for whom the town of Bradshaw in Taylor county was named , - could ride anything. He was a good roper , too. " There was lots of triouble trouble when ranchers first began building fences. The big ranchers would often fence in the 5 little stockman or farmer , crowding him out. Many times the man would buy up several sections [and?] fence in more than they had bought.

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